



A PARTNERSHIP TO ALLEVIATE HUNGER

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. No. 5360:
AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN IN THE RECESSION**

March 4, 2010

Good afternoon Members of the Select Committee on Children:

My name is Nancy Carrington. I am CEO of Connecticut Food Bank, the largest centralized source of donated emergency food in Connecticut. I am here to speak in support of House Bill No. 5360: An Act Concerning Children in the Recession.

Connecticut Food Bank serves 650 food-assistance programs in six of Connecticut's eight counties: Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham. Food-assistance programs include food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and child and adult day programs for low-income people. We are distributing 37 tons of food every business day.

House Bill No. 5360 contains critical provisions that will help Connecticut's anti-hunger advocates effectively combat childhood hunger in and out of our schools. In Connecticut, households with children struggle with food hardship a lot more than households without children. Chronic hunger in children has long-term health, developmental, educational, and workforce and job-readiness repercussions.

According to the Food Research and Action Center and Gallup organization, 1 in 5 Connecticut households with children does not have enough money to buy the food they need.

Recently, I met a single mother who told me about the challenges she and her four children face as they struggle to keep food on the table. Sue, a middle class homeowner living on Connecticut's shoreline, was laid off from her purchasing job last year when a local company had to downsize. She has been looking for a job since then. To help stretch her unemployment benefits, Sue has been eating at a local soup kitchen for lunch while her children are in school. But Sue has to cutback on food for her children so she can continue to keep the family home. Fortunately, her children qualify for free school lunches. But the school district doesn't offer an expanded school breakfast program so five days out of the week Sue's children go without breakfast so they can have dinner at night.

Provisions in House Bill No. 5360 would encourage schools to participate in the federal School Breakfast Program so children like Sue's will not have to start their school day hungry.

The proposed legislation would also provide outreach funds for the Summer Food Service Program, which helps ensure children are fed during the months when they have no access to school meals. Increased outreach funds and grants to site sponsors will help reach and feed more children.

Your support is critical at this difficult time. Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will join the fight against hunger and you will visit our food bank to see the challenges we and your constituents are facing each day.

Connecticut Food Bank

P.O. Box 8686

New Haven, CT 06531

//203.469.5000

//203.256.1935

//203.759.1919

//203.469.4871

//203.256.1648

//203.759.1921

www.ctfoodbank.org

A Member of  **FEEDING
AMERICA**